



TN Human Rights Commission

Spencer Wiggins, Chairman

Beverly L. Watts, Executive Director

710 James Robertson Parkway, Ste 100

Corner of Rosa Parks Blvd.

Nashville, TN 37243

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## For Immediate Release

Contact: Esperanza Soriano 741.5825  
esperanza.soriano@state.tn.us

### **Tennessee Human Rights Commission Names New Chairman of the Board and Executive Committee Members**

**(Nashville, TN - November 2008)** On November 21, 2008, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) appointed its new Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. Patricia Pierce of Harriman, TN will take the helm at the next Commissioner's meeting in January 2009. Pierce's predecessor Spencer Wiggins who graciously served the Commission as Board Chair was greatly committed to the work of the Commission. "We appreciate Spencer's service to the Commission. He served with dedication and enthusiasm for the work being done for the people of this great state," said Beverly Watts, THRC Executive Director.

As the newly appointed Chair, Pierce is no stranger to the Commission. Before spending 29 years with Vanderbilt University, she served as compliance director for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission and as a member of the Board of Commissioners for the middle Tennessee region. Upon retiring from Vanderbilt University and returning to her home in East Tennessee in 2007, Governor Bredesen appointed Pierce to the Board for another six-year term to represent the East Tennessee region.

Other nominations that took place included the Vice-Chair and Board Secretary. According to the Commission by-laws, the executive committee shall be made up of three vice-chairs and a secretary and are to act for the Chair in his or her absence.

Edwin P. Osborne, a certified public accountant has been nominated to represent the East Tennessee region as Vice-Chair of the Commission. Osborne has served in various civic and professional roles including former Hamblen County Commissioner, Chairman of Morristown EMS Board and United Way Board member. His background includes Audit Director for USA operations of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Senior Vice-President for Greater Louisville Economic Development Partnership and Director of Accounting for the Florida Department of Insurance and Rehab & Liquidation Bureau.

Stacey A. Garrett, a founding member of Bone McAllester Norton, PLLC and chair of the firm's Board of Directors was nominated Vice-Chair for the middle Tennessee region. Garrett concentrates her practice in the areas of higher education, corporate transactions, immigration, health care and government affairs. Governor Bredesen designated Garrett to serve on a Judicial Redistricting Study Committee and the Committee to Study the Administration of the Death Penalty. In 2003, she was named to *The Tennessean's* "Top 40 Under 40." In 2003, 2004 and 2006, her peers in the Nashville legal community named her to the *Nashville Business Journal's* "Best of the Bar" in the area of immigration law. In 2007, Ms. Garrett was honored to be named as one of the *Nashville Business Journal's* Women of Influence in the Entrepreneur category. She is also a graduate of the Partnership Institute's 2003-2004 Nashville Leadership.

David Cocke an attorney with the Bogatin Law Firm, PLC in Memphis has been nominated West Tennessee Vice-Chair. Cocke practices in the areas of Commercial Litigation; Bankruptcy Law; and Health Law. He earned his Baccalaureate from Yale University (1967) and earned his Juris Doctorate from Harvard University. Cocke served as law clerk to the Honorable Robert M. McRae, Jr. U.S. District Judge, Western District of Tennessee (1973-1974). He served as Chairman of the Shelby County Democratic Party (1987-1989; 1999-2001) and is a member of the Memphis and American Bar Associations.

A.J. Starling, director of Political Affairs as been nominated to serve as Secretary of the Board for a third term. Before becoming political Affairs director, he served as director of the Technical Assistance Program where he was responsible for the directing, planning and supervising of all phases and operations of this program. Under his direction, the program increased from three to six employees and now has a budget of nearly a half a million dollars.

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